

Interest Groups

An organization of people sharing a common interest or goal that seeks to influence the making of public policy.

Well Known Interest Groups

- ❑ Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ National Association of Manufacturers
- ❑ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- ❑ Urban League
- ❑ American Farm Bureau Federation
- ❑ Farmer's Union

Institutional Interest Groups

Institutional Interest Groups

1. Individuals or organizations representing other organizations.
 1. Ex. Corporations, Law Firms, Public relations firms,
 1. Funded from foundations or the government

Membership Interest Groups

Membership Interest Groups

- ▶ Americans join same groups more frequently than people in other nations.
- ▶ Groups, clubs, and organizations made out of members.
- ▶ Ex. Sierra Club, National Rifle Association, NAACP



Incentives to Join

Solidary: Sense of pleasure or status from meeting together, companionship

- ▶ Tend to be only face-to-face contact
- ▶ National interest groups organize themselves into coalition
- ▶ Ex: League of Women Voters, NAACP



Incentives to Join

Material: Money or services of monetary value from caucus or membership dues

- ▶ American Association of Retired Persons supplies elderly with low costs of life insurance, low costs on drugs, etc. (45% of American elderly are members)
- Ex. Illinois farm bureau gets discounted farm supplies



Incentives to Join

- ▶ **Purposive:** the appeal of their stated goals, members are passionate
 - ▶ Public interest lobby: an issue that benefits nonmembers
- ▶ Catastrophes tend to cause spikes in membership and support for certain issues
- ▶ In time interest returns to normal



Social Movements

- ▶ A widely shared demand for change in some aspect of the social or political order
- ▶ Ex.
 - ▶ Environmental Movement
 - ▶ Feminist Movement
 - ▶ Union Movement

Social Movements

► Environmental

- In the 1890's, conservation issues arose leading to the formation of new environmental interest groups
- Later actions in the mid 1900's led to the emergence of the Environmental Defense Fund and Environmental Action
- Ex. Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, and the National Wildlife Federation



Social Movements

► Feminist Movement

- Major issue in the 1920's was voting which led to the creation of the League of Women Voters to help organize and educate women on their new right to vote

► Three Kinds of Organizations:

1. Solidary incentive groups
2. Purposive incentive groups
3. Caucus Group



Social Movements

- ▶ Union Movement
 - ▶ Over time a social movement will usually die out and with it many interest groups that support the movement
 - ▶ In 1945 union membership reached an all time high after the Great Depression. Union membership has never been as great since.

